DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 303 867 EA 020 669

TITLE	Raising Your Wellness Grade.
INSTITUTION	American Association of School Administrators, Arlington, Va.; American Council of Life Insurance, Washington, D.C.; Health Insurance Association of America, Washington, D.C.
REPORT NO	ISBN-0-87652-104-9
PUB DATE	85
NOTE	32p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Publications, American Association of School Administrators, 1801 North Moore Street, Arlington, VA 22209-9988 (Stock No. 021-00155; $5.00 prepaid).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Curriculum Development; Elementary Secondary Education; Health Education; *Health Programs; Health Promotion; Life Style; Program Content; *Program Descriptions; Program Design; *Quality of Life; School Districts; Stress Management; *Well Being
IDENTIFIERS	Public Health Service; *Wellness

ABSTRACT

Through an effective wellness program, one can improve his/her lifestyle to achieve a healthy, long life. The concept of wellness is defined in the beginning of this booklet. Next, the benefits of a wellness program are noted. A section is devoted to a "healthstyle" self-test developed by the U.S. Public Health Service. Once the health-style self-test has been analyzed, the next step is to set goals for achieving wellness; a health habits worksheet developed by one school district is exemplified. A chapter is devoted to the four main areas to be included in a wellness program: exercise, nutrition, stress reduction, and health/safety awareness. The final chapter suggests branching out into the community to organize wellness support groups or programs. (SI)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

RAISING YOUR WELLNESS GRADE

ED303867

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

W Henry

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

EA 020 669

ANS Stock No. 021-00172-1
Library of Congress Card Catalog No. 85-63629
ISBN No. 0-87652-104-9
Copyright 1985
American Association of School Administrators, Arlington, Virginia

RAISING YOUR WELLNESS GRADE

What is *wellness* and why is it important to you? This booklet will help you answer these questions and provide some hints on how you can improve your lifestyle to achieve wellness. You may already be involved in a personal wellness program or may have thought about starting one. Whatever your thoughts on wellness, you should find enough information in this booklet to get started. Through an effective wellness program, you can begin to take charge of your own life and do those things that will help you prevent illness, increase your chances for a long, healthy life, and give you the satisfaction of being at your best at work or at home.

SECTION 1

What Is Wellness?

What does wellness actually mean? It's difficult to provide a single definition because the concept addresses many needs — physiological, emotional, social, and even spiritual. All wellness programs have one thing in common: they emphasize the positive ways you can increase your prospects for a good life. As a matter of fact, in part due to wellness, a new medical approach — "prospective medicine" — has evolved. Patients discuss with their doctors how healthy they would like to be throughout their lives. Then they map out with the doctors any changes they need to make in their lifestyles to achieve those goals.

Whether you choose to go that far or not, taking a look at your healthstyle and identifying ways to improve it will only make your life better. Doing so gives you more control over how you handle stress, work, relaxation, and other areas of your life, and generally improves the quality of your life.

SECTION 2

Why Wellness For Me?

s many as seven of the ten leading causes of death in the nation can be made less threatening if we apply common sense to our lifestyles. Many people are already working on it. Since 1970 there has been a 20 percent decline in cigarette smoking — a decline that affects smokers and nonsmokers alike. On the average we are consuming 15 percent less saturated fat and reducing cholesterol. Twice as many people have high blood pressure under control. More and more, people are becoming involved in some sort of regular exercise program.

What do these changes mean for individuals? Those who quit smoking can possibly add years to their lives. Decreasing saturated fats and reducing cholesterol in the diet improves a person's chances of avoiding heart trouble. Many researchers have also implicated an excess of fats in the development of some forms of cancer. For people who exercise regularly, the benefits are extensive:

- Your body as a whole becomes healthier because exercise affects the heart, lungs, muscles, skin, brain, blood and blood vessels, bones, joints, and nervous and digestive systems.
- You can reduce stress, anxiety, boredom, frustration, and depression, and also sleep more soundly.
- Your morale will get a boost because exercise improves self-image and promotes a sense of well-being.

You may at first resist the idea of starting up a wellness program, but there are too many reasons to be in favor of it. While a wellness program may sound formidable, it is nothing

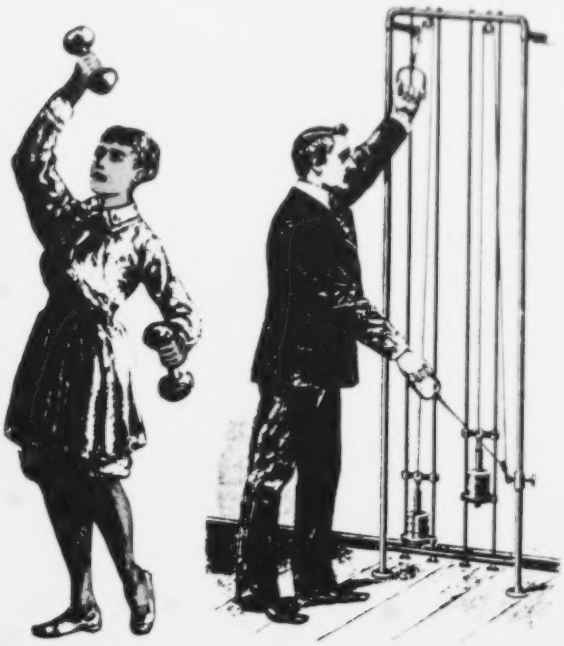
more than learning to improve your awareness of *exercise, nutrition, stress reduction,* and *healthy/safety measures*. Each of these components complements the others. The extent to which you choose to work on them becomes your individual wellness program.

Once you have instituted your own program, you'll feel better not only about what you are doing for yourself, but also about how you are helping others. As an educator, you set an example for the young people in your care, for their parents, for the community, and for other educators around you.

As a staff member you'll be more productive, more healthy, and reduce your chances of becoming one of the statistics — an absentee, a burnout, or a turnover. Many businesses and some school systems — recognizing the value of wellness — have started programs to promote health. They know it can make a difference in absentee and medical costs, reduce stress levels, and increase productivity.

Of course what really counts is what a good individual wellness program can mean for you.

Exercise improves self-image and promotes a sense of well-being.



How To Begin: Knowing Your Healthstyle

ow would you profile your healthstyle?

To help you answer that question, we are including a healthstyle self-test. You have probably seen this sort of test elsewhere. This one, developed by the U.S. Public Health Service, seems to cover the topic well and includes health choices recommended for most of us (some of these choices may not apply to people with certain chronic diseases, handicaps, or to pregnant women).

When you take the test, total your score for each area and check what the scores indicate about your lifestyle.

Of course, before you begin any sort of health program, you need to review your medical history. Tell your doctor what you want to do and ask for a medical assessment. You might ask a school health professional for assistance in locating a suitable medical history form that will help you and your doctor analyze where you are on a wellness scale. Most health professionals strongly recommend a physical examination before a person begins a health program.

HEALTHSTYLE SELF-TEST

	Almost Always	Sometimes	Almost Never
Stress Control			
1. I have a job or do other work that I enjoy.	2	1	0
2. I find it easy to relax and express my feelings freely.	2	1	0
3. I recognize early, and prepare for, events or situations likely to be stressful for me.	2	1	0
4. I have close friends, relatives, or others whom I can talk to about personal matters and call on for help when needed.	2	1	0
5. I participate in group activities (such as church and community organizations) or hobbies that I enjoy.	2	1	0

Stress Control Score: _____

Safety			
1. I wear a seat belt while riding in a car.	2	1	0
2. I avoid driving while under the influence of alcohol and other drugs.	2	1	0
3. I obey traffic rules and the speed limit when driving.	2	1	0
4. I am careful when using potentially harmful products or substances (such as household cleaners, poisons, and electrical devices).	2	1	0
5. I avoid smoking in bed.	2	1	0

Safety Score: _____

Cigarette Smoking			
If you never smoke, enter a score of 10 for this section and go to the next section on *Alcohol and Drugs*.			
1. I avoid smoking cigarettes.	2	1	0
2. I smoke only low tar and nicotine cigarettes or I smoke a pipe or cigars.	2	1	0

Smoking Score: _____

Exercise Fitness			
1. I maintain a desired weight, avoiding overweight and underweight.	2	1	0
2. I do vigorous exercises for 15-30 minutes at least 3 times a week (examples include running, swimming, brisk walking).	2	1	0

	Almost Always	Sometimes	Almost Never
3. I do exercises that enhance my muscle tone for 15-30 minutes at least 3 times a week (examples include yoga and calisthenics).	2	1	0
4. I use part of my leisure time participating in individual, family, or team activities that increase my level of fitness (such as gardening, bowling, golf, and baseball).	2	1	0

Exercise Fitness Score: _____

Alcohol and Drugs

1. I avoid drinking alcoholic beverages or I drink no more than 1 or 2 drinks a day.	2	1	0
2. I avoid using alcohol or other drugs (especially illegal drugs) as a way of handling stressful situations or the problems in my life.	2	1	0
3. I am careful not to drink alcohol when taking certain medicines (for example, medicine for sleeping pain, colds, and allergies) or when pregnant.	2	1	0
4. I read and follow the label directions when using prescribed and over-the-counter drugs.	2	1	0

Alcohol and Drugs Score: _____

Eating Habits

1. I eat a variety of foods each day, such as fruits and vegetables, whole-grain breads, and cereals; lean meats, dairy products, dry peas and beans, and nuts and seeds.	2	1	0
2. I limit the amount of fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol I eat (including fat on meats, eggs, butter, cream, shortenings, and organ meats such as liver).	2	1	0
3. I limit the amount of salt I eat by cooking with only small amounts, not adding salt at the table, and avoiding salty snacks.	2	1	0
4. I avoid eating too much sugar (especially frequent snacks of sticky candy or soft drinks).	2	1	0

Eating Habits Score: _____

WHAT YOUR SCORES MEAN TO YOU

Scores of 9 and 10

Excellent! Your answers show that you are aware of the importance of this area to your health. More important, you are putting your knowledge to work for you by practicing good health habits. As long as you continue to do so, this area should not pose a serious health risk. It's likely that you are setting an example for your family and friends to follow. Since you got a very high test score on this part of the test, you may want to consider other areas where your scores indicate room for improvement.

Scores of 6 to 8

Your health practices in this area are good, but there is room for improvement. Look again at the items you answered with a "Sometimes" or "Almost Never." What changes can you make to improve your score? Even a small change can often help you achieve better health.

Scores of 3 to 5

Your health risks are showing! Would you like more information about the risks you are facing and about why it is important for you to change these behaviors? Perhaps you need help in deciding how to successfully make the changes you desire. In either case, help is available.

Scores of 0 to 2

Obviously you were concerned enough about your health to take the test, but your answers show that you may be taking serious and unnecessary risks with your health. Perhaps you are not aware of the risks and what to do about them. You can easily get the information and help you need to improve, if you wish. The next step is up to you.

The Next Step: Setting Goals

nnounce to the world that you plan on being healthier! That's not as silly as it may sound. We all know that it is easier to stick to our goals if we tell others about them and have their encouragement.

Many resources are available to help you achieve your goals. School health professionals can get you started with assessments and information. Local and state health departments and the federal government have issued all sorts of health pamphlets on individual and general health problems. They may also have information on specific programs or facilities available in your community. Many of the larger health associations, like the American Cancer Society, the American Diabetes Association, the American Heart Association, and the American Lung Association will provide information pamphlets, workshops, and other programs for the general public. Health care providers, insurance and pharmaceutical companies, and other organizations also have products or programs to help you construct a good wellness program.

Once you have analyzed your healthstyle, medical history, and condition, and are informed about what's out there, it is time to set your goals for achieving wellness. You might be part of a group or you might be on your own, but you are the one who will decide what is realistic for you in these areas:

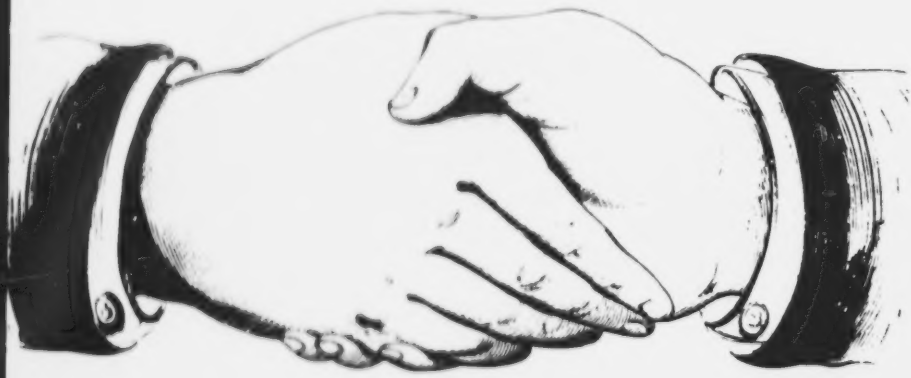
- Losing weight
- Stopping smoking
- Improving your cardiovascular condition, muscle tone, flexibility
- Learning basic medical self-care
- Reducing stress levels
- Developing better eating habits
- Putting safety first always.

Do be realistic. You won't achieve all your goals at once. A major improvement in your health won't happen without an equally major effort. If you have serious health problems that can be addressed by changes in your lifestyle, feeling better may take a bit longer.

To help you achieve your goals, you will need to have priorities and a timetable. Some people set up contracts with themselves to meet specific needs, such as nutrition and exercise.

Writing your priorities down with a timetable will help you. For that reason, we have included a health habits worksheet developed by one school district. It can serve as a self-contract with a built-in evaluation. Of course, you can modify it to fit your individual needs.

Some people set up contracts with themselves . . . .



HEALTH HABITS WORKSHEET

1. List four or five health habits you would like to develop (more sensible eating, regular exercise, coping with stress, etc.)

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

2. Now, go back and circle the habit you would most like to develop.

3. Turn your wish into a goal. Set target dates for starting toward and reaching that goal.

_____

_____

4. Helps and Hindrances

What will help you reach your goal? What will stand in the way?

Helps _____

Hindrances _____

5. Action Plan:

Who (name)? _____

Will do what? _____

Starting when (date)? _____

6. Write down the names of a few people who will help you reach your goal.

Wellness Support System — **Signatures** (of support people)

Name _____

Name _____

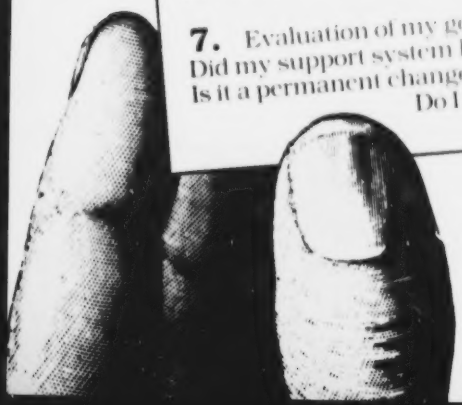
Name _____

7. Evaluation of my goal?

Did my support system help?

Is it a permanent change?

Do I feel better?



SECTION 5

Practicing Wellness

Now that you have all the appropriate information, you are ready to begin practicing a wellness program. Ideally, your program should include four ingredients: exercise, nutrition, stress reduction, and health/safety awareness. The actual steps you take to improve in these areas depend on the choices you make. Here are some suggestions on how to get started. You may, of course, wish to go into any one of these areas in greater depth.

EXERCISE

We all know we should exercise regularly, but how many of us are doing it? Don't feel guilty because you haven't put on a pair of jogging shoes lately, or because the tennis racket gathers dust in the closet. Be positive. Take another look at some of the benefits of various types of exercise, and find out what you need to know to set up an individual exercise program.

It's important to remember that there is some form of exercise for almost everyone. The value of exercise comes not from helping you maintain weight or eliminate extra weight. It also tones your major muscles, helps to reduce stress, gives a renewed sense of well-being, helps you sleep better, and helps protect your body from the damage of cardiovascular diseases such as heart attacks, strokes, atherosclerosis, and high blood pressure.

Before you choose an exercise program, here are some questions you need to ask:

- How physically fit am I?
- How old am I?
- What benefits do I want from exercise?
- Where do I prefer to exercise?
- Would I rather exercise alone or in a group?
- How much time, money, and energy am I willing or can I afford to invest in an exercise program?
- Should I consult a physician before starting an exercise program? (Many people who start gradually do not need to consult a doctor, but if your medical history or that of your family or your age indicates a possible risk, talk to your doctor first.)

Exercise with a friend or join a class.

TYPES OF EXERCISE

Exercise actually falls into two categories: *aerobic* and *anaerobic*. Aerobic exercise is rhythmic exercise that allows you to maintain an elevated pulse rate for a continuous 15-20 minute period. When you are performing an aerobic exercise properly, you should not run out of breath. (Aerobic means "with oxygen"). If you are exercising and run out of breath and do not maintain an elevated pulse rate for a continuous period, then the exercise, no matter what it is, is called anaerobic ("without oxygen"). It's important to know the difference between these forms of exercise because aerobic exercises give your body the most cardiovascular benefit for the least amount of time commitment. Also, depending on your

condition, what is an aerobic exercise for you may not be aerobic for another person.

Where you are on the fitness scale determines where you should begin. In the beginning, a one-mile walk may be all you need. As your conditioning improves, you may need to change your form of exercise appropriately.

Some typical aerobic exercises are indoor cycling, jogging, rope skipping, or brisk walking. Other forms of exercise, performed properly, can be aerobic also. For example, dancing, handball/squash, soccer, swimming, skating, basketball, cycling, can be considered aerobic exercise if they maintain an appropriately elevated heart rate for 15-20 continuous minutes. Here is one method for figuring *your* heart rate "target zone":

- Subtract your age from 220.
- The target heart rate (during exercise) is 70 to 85 percent of that figure. That is your target zone.
- The normal resting heart rate is 60 to 80 beats per minute.

When you first begin an exercise program, you should take your pulse regularly. Consult a health professional to learn the proper way to do it. As your conditioning improves, you will not need to take your pulse every time you exercise.

Before you start an exercise routine, take your pulse. Immediately after you stop exercising, take your pulse again. Count your pulse for ten seconds and multiply by six. The total will tell you if you have achieved your target heart rate. If you have not, you need to exercise harder. If you are over your target zone, you need to slow down. Adjust your exercising level to fit within your target zone, and once there, check your pulse at least once a week during the first three months, and periodically after that.

How long and how often should you exercise? According to the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, each exercise period should last 25-40 minutes. Warm up for five minutes, exercise for 15-30 minutes, and cool down for five minutes.

To do the most good, you should exercise aerobically about three times a week. But if you just want to relax, relieve tension, improve coordination and muscle tone, other forms of exercise can and should be a part of your lifestyle. Sports

such as baseball, bowling, golf, and so on can add just as much in their own way as aerobic exercises.

ADDITIONAL HINTS

To avoid unnecessary injuries or stress to your body, these hints can be helpful:

- Build up your level of activity gradually and learn the proper way to warm up for your exercise.
- Pay attention to your body. If you are in pain, breathless, dizzy, or faint, you're doing something wrong. Most experts recommend that you alternate days of strenuous exercise. Muscles normally need time to rest and recover.
- Use proper precautions for outdoor activities. On hot, humid days, exercise less than your normal amount until your body adapts; drink extra fluids; know the signs of heat exhaustion and heat stroke. On cold days, be careful not to wear too much clothing; wear a hat; and again, drink enough fluids.
- Don't start strenuous exercise right after you have eaten.

If you're running or cycling, enjoy the scenery.

STICKING WITH IT

Once you've decided to set up an exercise program, it's sometimes hard to stay with it, no matter how good your intentions. Here are some hints that should help:

- Exercise with a friend three or four times a week or join a class.
- Add variety. Not only is it better for your body to vary the schedule, it also helps you maintain interest.
- Make exercise a priority in your schedule. This is a gift to yourself — not something you are doing for someone else.
- Enjoy yourself. Get into the rhythm of your walking, jogging, or cycling. Enjoy the moments of peace. If you're running or cycling, enjoy the scenery.
- Some people need the structure of a regular program; others need lack of structure. Know the kind of person you are and choose an exercise that fits you.
- If your body is tired, take a break from the schedule. Once you are in shape, you can go up to 2 or 3 days without exercise and not lose the benefits of your conditioning.

NUTRITION

Nutrition is not just a concern for people who are overweight or underweight. Being aware of and taking care of your nutritional needs prepares your body to handle the stresses of living. Maintaining the proper weight is only one of these stresses.

If weight reduction is one of your goals, eating properly, along with a proper amount of exercise, will help you achieve it. If you are overweight, it's generally because you are eating more calories than your body is expending. Being overweight is a serious health risk. As the U.S. Public Health Service points out, overweight persons are at a greater risk for diabetes, gallbladder disease, and high blood pressure.

As important as proper weight is, what you eat is just as important. Good eating habits will control the amount and types of fat you consume, as well as the amount of cholesterol, sugar, and salt you ingest.

Here are some simple guidelines to follow that could reduce your risk of heart disease, cancer, and other chronic diseases.

- Don't consume more calories than your body can burn off.
- Cut back on the fats in your diet — animal and vegetable.
- Watch your cholesterol and cut back if necessary.

- Cut down on sugars and salt.
- Eat more fruit, vegetables, legumes (dry beans and peas), and whole grain cereals.

Your nutritional goals should include caution in consuming alcohol and in taking medications. Heavy, regular use of alcohol can lead to a host of medical problems and interfere with body functions. Take drugs only with a doctor's advice and avoid excessive or unnecessary use. Remember that nutrition is more than what's on the table. It is everything you take to help your body run properly.

Eat more fruit, vegetables, legumes, and whole grain cereals.

OVERWEIGHT? AND WHERE TO BEGIN?

If you want to know whether you are overweight or not, you can consult a multitude of height and weight charts and probably get a different answer from each. The best answer comes from taking an honest look at yourself in the mirror and then consulting with your doctor. The charts may give you a general idea of what you should weigh, but much depends on your specific build and the ratio of muscle to fat in your body.

DETERMINING CALORIC NEEDS

If you decide you need to lose weight, you should know how many calories your body requires before you can determine how many calories you should eliminate.

To calculate your approximate calorie range, you can use this short formula:

1. List your present weight in pounds.

2. Determine the activity level that best describes you:

   Sedentary — low level of activity, for example: sitting, driving a car, lying down, sleeping, standing.

   Moderately Active — Medium level of activity: participate in an aerobic type of exercise a minimum of 3-4 times a week at 30 minutes each time.

Very Active — High level of activity: exercise vigorously on a regular basis: for example: a long-distance runner, swimmer, or ditch digger.

3. Choose the appropriate number from the column based on your gender and activity level:

	Male	Female
Sedentary	16	14
Moderately active	21	18
Very Active	26	22

These numbers reflect the approximate number of calories needed daily for each pound of body weight.

4. Multiply your present weight by the number chosen in #3.

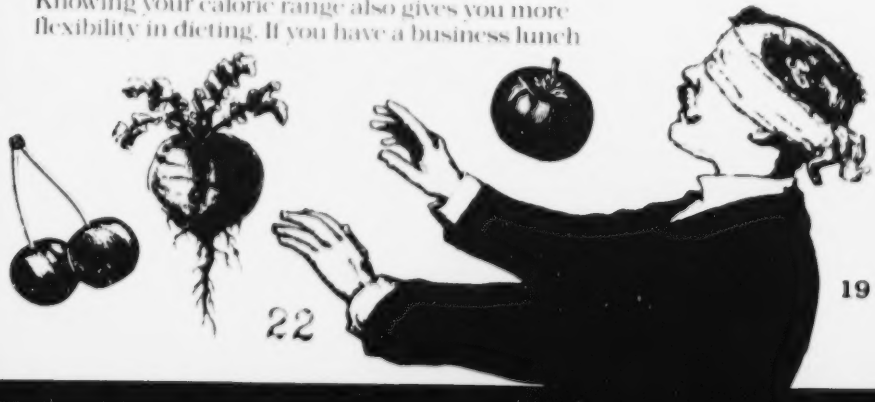
		Example:
Weight	_____	130 (weight)
	X	x 18 (moderately active)
Total	= _____	2,340 (daily caloric requirement)

The total reflects the approximate number of calories needed daily to maintain your present weight.

5. To figure your caloric range, subtract 400 from your total and add 400 to your total. If, for example, your total is 2,000 calories, then your range of calories would be 1,600 to 2,400 calories a day.

Be aware of your nutritional needs . . . .

Knowing your caloric range can help you lose weight in a healthy way. Keep a food diary for a week by writing down everything you eat. Then look up the caloric count for all the foods. If you know what your caloric range should be and can see what it really is, then you are in a better position to know what you have to control. Knowing your caloric range also gives you more flexibility in dieting. If you have a business lunch



or dinner party to attend, you can rest easy about the extra calories by balancing them out with the rest of the week.

A word of caution though about cutting calories. You need to be sure that you are still meeting your nutritional needs. It's important to consult with a physician or qualified nutritionist before extensive dieting.

STRESS

Talk over problems with someone you can trust . . . .

Stress and its effect on individuals varies from one person to another. It is a natural reaction of the body to any pleasant or unpleasant demands placed on it. In modern times stressors can be physical — extremely hot temperatures — or psychological — tight deadlines, personal grief. Many medical experts now believe that a certain amount of stress is good for most people. Too little stress can actually make people unproductive and result in boredom, which itself produces psychological stress. Too much stress can make people sick. What makes stress good or bad is whether it is productive or nonproductive and how the individual handles it. Properly handled, says the U.S. Public Health Service, stress need not be a problem. However, there are unhealthy responses to stress such as alcohol abuse, reckless driving, or prolonged anger and grief, and these can cause both mental and physical problems.

Researchers still don't have answers to all the questions about the proper role of stress in each person's life, but they do know some coping techniques that can be used to deal with it. They recommend setting aside some time each day to relax, talking over problems with someone you can trust, and recognizing the difference between things that are "worth fighting for" and those that are less important.

Many researchers have constructed survey forms to help people assess the levels of stress in their lives. For example, University of Washington researcher Thomas H. Holmes concluded through his studies that all changes in people's lives, good or bad, produce levels of stress. As a result, Holmes established a social readjustment scale that lists possible major life events, each with a score matching their possible impact. Those taking the test check off any events that have occurred in the last year and total the points. If the totals for an individual are

high, it indicates a high level of stress for that year. The significant life events include such things as: buying a home, outstanding personal achievement, death of a loved one, or major change in job responsibilities. If stress levels are running high, the possibilities increase that the person will experience major illness or upheaval.

HOW DO YOU HANDLE STRESS?

A simple lifestyle assessment developed by the West Virginia Cooperative Extension Service provides a checklist that can help you realize how you handle stress, what sort of relationships you have, and how you feel about yourself. Although not a scientific measure, it does give you a chance to think about yourself and how you handle life. Fill in yes or no appropriately.

Stress/Anxiety Level

_____ I find it easy to relax.
_____ I am able to cope with stressful events as well as or better than most people.
_____ I have no trouble falling asleep or waking up.
_____ I rarely feel tense or anxious.
_____ I have no trouble completing tasks I have started.

Relationships

_____ I am married and living with my spouse.
_____ I have a lot of close friends.
_____ I am able to share my feelings with my spouse and/or other family members.
_____ When I have a problem, I have other people with whom I can talk it over.
_____ Given a choice between doing things by myself or with others, I usually choose to do things with others.

Life Satisfaction

_____ If I had my life to live over, I wouldn't make all that many changes.
_____ I've accomplished most of the things that I've set out to do in my life.
_____ I can't think of an area in my life that really disappoints me.
_____ As compared to the people with whom I grew up, I feel that I've done as well as they or better.

24

HANDLING STRESS

How you handle stress is an individualized matter, based in part on your background. But if you don't handle stress in a healthful way, you can change that. Remember that exercise and proper nutrition have a bearing on how well you cope with stress. They represent just two of the control factors you can establish to help you react to a stressful situation in a positive, constructive manner rather than letting it become negative and destructive. Here are some other techniques to use in reducing stress in your life:

- Know the difference between a worry and a concern. You can and should do something about a concern; you can't do anything about a worry.
- Turn worries into concerns. Ask yourself what is the worst that can happen and make plans to transform the worry into something you can act on.
- Believe in yourself and your ability to handle potentially stressful situations. There is nothing egotistical about taking pride in your capabilities.
- When you become angry or upset, write down a list of what is making you angry. Think about your feelings and discuss them with someone in as positive a manner as possible.
- Balance your work time with the right type of play time. For example, if your work is tightly

structured and scheduled, choose recreation that you can pace as you wish.

- Try to look at the positive side of distressing situations. The cliché "Every cloud has a silver lining" has a good deal of merit.

Using some of these methods are all a part of your taking charge.

HEALTH/SAFETY AWARENESS

Health and safety awareness means recognizing what you do to control your environment to promote your health and the health and well-being of others. If you do more than passively listen to admonitions about fastening your seatbelt, being careful of poisons, using equipment properly or obeying traffic rules, then you are on your way to making wellness a permanent part of your life.

To know how aware you are, you need to ask yourself questions like these:

- What basic emergency care techniques should I know — cardiopulmonary resuscitation, the Heimlich maneuver, and what else?
- How do I encourage good health habits among family members? Friends?
- How do health needs change as people grow older?
- What emergency procedures would I follow in case of fire? Any other accidents? Whom do I call?
- When was my last checkup? How often, considering my age, should I have a checkup?

Know the difference between a worry and a concern.

Wellness never grows old. Taking care of yourself, mentally and physically, can be a lifelong learning experience. There are innumerable resources available to help you — in your school, community, and through various government agencies. A good place to find out about resources is through the National Health Information Clearinghouse. It can refer you to one of 2,000 groups and organizations that provide health information to the public. Send your request to 1555 Wilson Blvd., Rosslyn, VA 22209, or call (800) 336-4797 (toll free).*

*Many of these resources are listed in a manual, *Wellness at the School Worksite* (from which much of the material in this booklet was taken), published by the Health Insurance Association of America and the American Council of Life Insurance, 1850 K Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006-2284.

SECTION 6

Building Wellness Support

e've discussed individual wellness programs and how they can help you take charge of the quality of your life. Wellness is your personal responsibility, but you might want to expand beyond yourself for several reasons:

- Many individuals stick with a program better if they have a support group with mutual interests.
- Branching out into the community may provide you with access to facilities that would not necessarily be available to an individual.
- You may want to involve other people in setting up wellness programs for truly altruistic reasons — it can help them, too.

Because of the benefits to the group as well as the individual, more and more businesses and school systems are organizing wellness programs. Even if your organization or school has not started a formal program, you might want to set up an informal one. Ask some friends to join you for running or brisk walking after school. That doesn't cost anything, except the expense of the shoes. You might ask a school health professional to collect information from various health associations and private companies and set up a display area in your school.

The wellness program could expand to include group memberships at local health clubs or use of the school gym or school equipment. As interest grows, the staff could invite speakers or organizations to provide information on specific health issues.

Consider asking others to join you in starting a wellness program. Get involved in the planning to be sure the program includes all the important elements.

KNOWING THE TERRITORY

Before you get started, it's a good idea to get information about what's needed and what's available.

- Conduct a survey to find out what school staff members are interested in and what they would be willing to support. Some wellness programs also include opportunities for participation for school staff members' families. If you decide to open the program to families, you need to include them in your survey.
- Take an inventory and find out what facilities, equipment, and so on are available through school districts and in the local community.
- Know what existing health services are already being offered in the school system or community. Services might include periodic

Ask some friends to join you for running . . . .

checkups, blood pressure screening, flu shots, and consumer or health education programs. Your wellness team may recommend that some of these services be offered at your building.

- Find out who on the staff is already involved in an individual wellness program — the runners, dancers, ex-smokers, cyclists, and others. Find out the hidden health talents in your school and get them involved.
- Use your community resources. Many public agencies, health care providers, and commercial companies have people who can give lectures or teach classes at the school site. They also have some good materials available. Manuals like *Wellness at the School Worksite*, mentioned earlier, provide excellent guidelines on how an institution can begin a wellness program.

Involving many others can only help . . . .

Next, draw up a plan for your school building and staff. Remember that:

- Each person has his or her own goals. Group activities are support systems that complement individual efforts.
- The program is voluntary.
- The goal is to help you and others around you make informed choices about your health.
- Educational and informational services are available to those who want to change their healthstyles.
- If you want to know whether the effort is worth the time and money, set up an evaluation procedure at the beginning and use it. Plan for baseline data. The evaluation may lead other individuals, groups, and schools to join the effort.
- Build into your wellness program the five essential phases of the wellness cycle:
  1. Screening and assessment of individuals
  2. Goal setting and prescriptions
  3. Group starter activities and educational experiences
  4. Feedback
  5. Reassessment.

Wellness is for all of us — together. Reaching out to the community around you for help with a wellness program and including the community in activities can make your school the center of a community-wide program.

Involving many others can only help you in your attempt to set your goals for a longer, healthier life in which you have taken charge. We hope this publication can help you get started, so that you will be able to say:

Every day in every way, I'm feeling better and better.

Notes

A joint project of:
Health Insurance Association of America
American Council of Life Insurance
American Association of School Administrators